



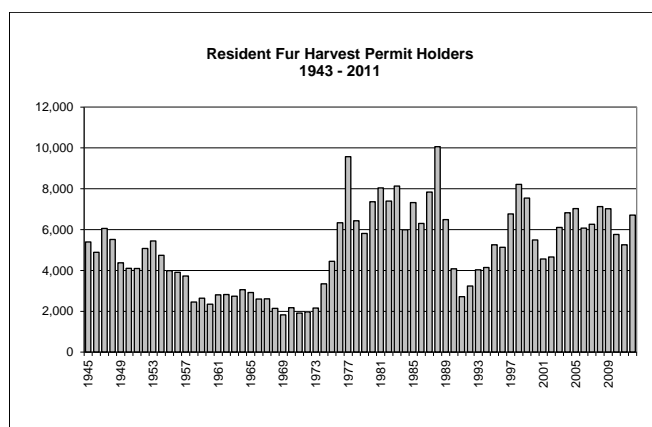
## FUR HARVEST SURVEY 2011/2012 SEASON

Sam Wilson  
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission  
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### Permits:

A total of 6,708 fur harvest permits were sold to Nebraska residents in 2011 (up from 5,256 in 2010). Twenty nine fur harvest permits were sold to nonresidents from 10 different states (AK, AR, IA, KS, MI, NC, OK, SD, UT and WI).



### Survey:

A fur harvest survey was sent to 6,389 fur harvest permit holders. The response rate to the survey was 20% yielding a total of 1,249 responses. In addition, surveys were sent to 32 licensed fur buyers, of which 25% (8) responded to the survey.

### Seasons:

Species	Trap and Hunt	Trap Only	Hunt only
Muskrat	N/A	Nov 1 – Mar. 31	N/A
Beaver	N/A	Nov 1 – Mar. 31	N/A
Bobcat	Dec. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	N/A
Raccoon	Nov. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	Sept. 1 – Oct. 31
Opossum	Nov. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	Sept. 1 – Oct. 31
Weasel	Nov. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	N/A
Mink	Nov. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	N/A
Red Fox	Nov. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	N/A
Gray Fox	Nov. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	N/A
Badger	Nov. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	N/A
Skunk	Year-round	N/A	N/A

### Harvest:

The estimated harvest during the 2011/2012 season was higher compared with the five-year average. Beaver, muskrat and bobcat showed the greatest increase (92%, 71% and 40% higher respectively). Woodchuck and red fox showed the only decrease (27% and 24% lower respectively) compared to the five-year average. The

total estimated harvest for the 2011/2012 season was higher than the 2010/2011 season with beaver and raccoon showing the greatest increase (up 157% and 43% respectively) and no species showing a decrease. Improved pelt prices compared to the previous season likely caused an increase in harvest effort. Furharvesters reported that 36% of coyotes and 10% of red foxes harvested showed symptoms of mange.

Species	Estimated Harvest			Previous Season	5 Yr Average 2007-2009
	Hunt	Trap	Total		
Raccoon	61,248	140,679	201,927	141,383	147,650
Muskrat	0	44,209	44,209	33,839	25,924
Opossum	4,418	23,334	27,752	20,776	26,378
Coyote <sup>1</sup>	12,093	12,918	25,012	21,185	24,630
Beaver	0	19,375	19,375	7,543	10,098
Striped Skunk	3,765	10,335	14,100	11,182	13,960
Badger	1,003	2,605	3,609	2,709	3,265
Mink	86	3,231	3,317	2,489	3,065
Red Fox	793	2,336	3,128	2,994	4,133
Bobcat <sup>2</sup>	441	1,472	1,913	1,530	1,363
Woodchuck	297	399	696	678	958

<sup>1</sup> Includes only harvest numbers provided by harvesters

<sup>2</sup> Total harvest based on pelt tagging, hunt column includes harvested road kills

### Nonresponder Bias:

The results of a 2003 phone survey indicate that active harvesters were 4.7 times more likely to respond to the fur harvest survey than those that did not participate in the 2002/2003 season. As a result, the proportion of inactive harvesters is greater in the population of nonresponders, likely resulting in an overestimation of total harvest estimates if simple extrapolation is used. Adjusting the 2011/2012 harvest data, based on the findings of the 2002/2003 follow up phone survey yields substantially lower total harvest estimates than the non-adjusted extrapolation.

Species	harvest not adjusted	Estimated total harvest adjusted for nonresponder bias
Raccoon	201,927	177,171
Muskrat	44,209	37,397
Opossum	27,752	24,862
Coyote	25,012	23,332
Beaver	19,375	20,560
Striped Skunk	14,100	14,323
Badger	3,609	3,469
Red Fox	3,128	2,750
Mink	3,317	2,715
Woodchuck	696	911

### Fur Harvesters:

Eighty percent of fur harvest survey responders indicated that they participated in the 2011/2012 fur harvest. Of those that were successful, 38% only trapped, 28% only hunted and 34% both trapped and hunted furbearers. The number of participants was lower than the previous year (837 compared to 1010 in 2010/2011). The average successful trapper harvested more than twice as many furbearers as the average hunter (68 vs. 26). According to the fur harvest survey, each fur harvester received permission from an average four landowners to harvest fur on their lands.

### Depredation:

The species most commonly harvested for depredation control purposes were raccoon, beaver and coyote.

Species	Number harvested for depredation	Percent of total harvest
Raccoon	17,325	9%
Beaver	6,068	31%
Coyote	3,862	15%
Striped Skunk	3,625	26%
Opossum	3,015	11%
Muskrat	2,071	5%
Badger	685	19%
Woodchuck	432	62%
Red Fox	275	9%
Bobcat	102	5%
Mink	43	1%

### Pelts:

Based on results from the annual fur buyer survey, overall prices for wild pelts of most furbearing species have increased compared with the previous season, and the five-year average. Bobcat, beaver and badger pelt prices have experienced the greatest increases with average prices 155%, 45% and 40% higher than during the 2010/2011 season. Striped skunk, muskrat and opossum prices showed the only decreases with average prices 29%, 13% and 13% lower than the 2010/2011 season. Bobcat pelts remain the most valuable with average prices \$170 higher than any other furbearer.

### Pelt Prices:

Species	2011-2012	2010-2011	5 Year Average
Bobcat	<b>\$186.29</b>	\$72.97	\$95.99
Red Fox	<b>\$16.62</b>	\$12.53	\$11.74
Coyote	<b>\$14.30</b>	\$13.71	\$14.01
Mink	<b>\$12.82</b>	\$11.20	\$11.24
Beaver	<b>\$10.36</b>	\$7.17	\$9.91
Raccoon	<b>\$10.09</b>	\$9.43	\$9.32
Badger	<b>\$8.18</b>	\$5.84	\$8.54
Muskrat	<b>\$3.78</b>	\$4.37	\$3.45

Striped Skunk	<b>\$1.82</b>	\$2.56	\$3.52
Opossum	<b>\$0.84</b>	\$0.97	\$1.24

### Early Raccoon Hunting-Only Season:

Estimates from the fur harvest survey indicate that harvesters who participated in the early raccoon season killed an estimated 5,421 raccoons (compared with 4,698 in 2010). The early raccoon-hunting season accounted for 2% of all raccoons taken during the entire 2011/2012 season (1% lower than in 2010/2011). Concerns with the season have been voiced by raccoon trappers fearing reduced trapping success due to localized population reduction by hunters prior to the trapping season. Fur buyers are concerned with the influx of valueless pelts on the market (raccoon pelts usually do not prime up until the middle of November).

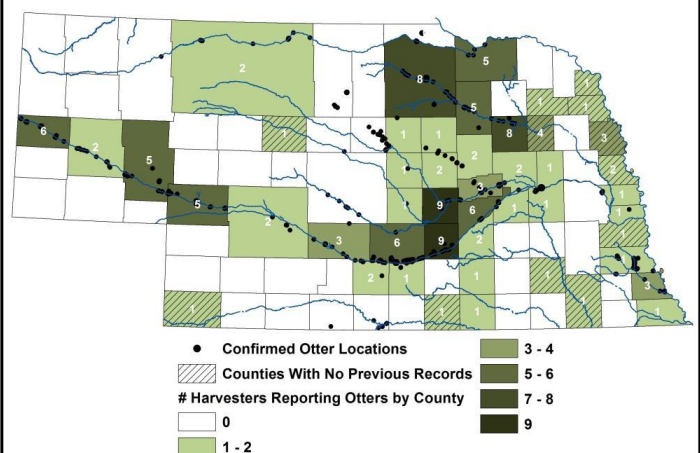
### Gray Fox Tagging:

In 2002, a tagging requirement was implemented for all gray fox taken in Nebraska. No gray foxes were tagged during the 2011/2012 season.

### River Otter Distribution:

Information from fur harvesters regarding river otter distribution was collected through the 2011/2012 fur harvest survey. River otters or their sign were reported in 12 counties with no previously documented presence. This information will be used in conjunction with other distribution information in order to focus survey efforts and determine the current distribution of this threatened species.

**# of Fur Harvesters Reporting River Otters by County**



**Special thanks to all fur harvesters and fur buyers that made this analysis possible by responding to the fur harvest and fur buyer survey!**